

Education

MANITOBA

Volume 5
Number 2
February 2007

Published by School Programs Division (Kindergarten to Grade 12) of Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth

Assessment Literacy: A Message from the Minister

The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.

—Alvin Toffler

One of the main goals of the provincial assessment initiative is to foster assessment and instructional practices that support students in becoming engaged, competent, lifelong learners. Recent research clearly shows that when students are involved in the learning process, achievement improves as does their capacity for further learning. Our students need to develop an awareness of what they know, how they learn, and how to respond to new learning challenges.

This involves new learning for educators and parents too. A number of initiatives are underway to enhance assessment literacy in Manitoba. The release of *Rethinking Classroom Assessment with Purpose in Mind: Assessment for Learning, Assessment as Learning, Assessment of Learning* a year ago set the stage for professional dialogue and learning opportunities. The document identifies three purposes of assessment:

- assessment *for* learning—where assessment helps teachers gain insight into what students understand in order to plan and guide instruction, and provide helpful feedback
- assessment *as* learning—where students reflect on their learning and identify strategies to adjust and advance their learning, and assume increased responsibility for their learning
- assessment *of* learning—where assessment information informs students, teachers, and parents, as well as the broader educational community, of achievement at a certain point in time in order to celebrate success, plan interventions, and support continued progress

All three purposes are important and must be appropriately balanced in order to best support and improve student learning.

The provincial Middle Years Assessment Policy has provided another avenue for enhancing assessment literacy. The policy has at its core the purpose of promoting academic achievement and student engagement with school through an increased emphasis on assessment *for* and *as* learning (formative assessment). The second purpose of the policy is to gather and communicate information on how well students are

achieving in certain key areas. This assessment of learning occurs in January so that teachers, students, and parents can use what they learn from it to inform ongoing instruction. This is consistent with the belief that the purpose of all assessment is to support learning.

Rethinking assessment causes us to reflect on the way we communicate what we know about the learner and the learning. Research is telling us that descriptive feedback is much more powerful than traditional evaluative feedback (grades) in promoting ongoing learning. My Department is presently developing a support document on communicating student learning, to provide guidelines for communication practices (including reporting) that best support ongoing learning.

Many school divisions and partner organizations are engaged in assessment initiatives and are finding creative ways of offering professional learning opportunities for their staff and for parents. Department staff are also engaged in professional learning regarding assessment and are responding to requests for workshops, consultation, and support. Together we can support all of our students in their learning journey.

Honourable Peter Bjornson

Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth

Inside

National and International Assessments	2
More Time for Healthy Kids	2
Credit for Cultural Exploration	3
Independent Study: New and Revised Courses	3
Global Interactions in Manitoba's Classrooms	4
Increased Support to Community Schools	6
Parents Build Aboriginal Student Success	7
Manitoba's New Career Development Courses	8
Intensive French in Manitoba	9
Education for Sustainable Development Grants	10
MERN Research Profile: Rural Education	11
Brandon School Division's Middle Years Initiative	12



National and International Assessments

Manitoba has participated in two large-scale assessments of student achievement over the past number of years, namely the School Achievement Indicators Program (SAIP) and the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). These programs allow Manitoba the opportunity to make observations about and evaluate its educational programming, including the context in which education takes place, on a national or international scale.

SAIP, which targeted 13- and 16-year-olds and was administered annually, has been replaced by the new Pan-Canadian Assessment Program (PCAP). PCAP will be administered to 13-year-olds only once every three years and, like PISA, will assess the domains of reading, science, and mathematics. Similar to PISA, there will be a major domain each administration, with the others present as minor domains (with fewer assessment items and less detailed subsequent analyses). The first administration of PCAP will occur in May of 2007 with reading as the major domain. It is anticipated that approximately 2000 students

from 100 Manitoba schools will be selected to participate. Information about PCAP is available on the following Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, websites: <www.cmec.ca/pcap/indexe.stm> (English) and <www.cmec.ca/pcap/indexf.stm> (French).

PISA, which targets 15-year-olds and is administered in many countries around the world, was administered for the third time in 2006 with science as the major domain. First results from PISA 2006 are expected by the end of 2007. The next administration is scheduled for 2009 and will focus on reading. This is the same major domain that PCAP will assess this spring for 13-year-olds—this student population, then, will be 15 when PISA 2009 is administered to 15-year-olds, permitting certain cohort analyses of results. Further information about PISA is available at <www.cmec.ca/pisa/indexe.stm> (English) and <www.cmec.ca/pisa/indexf.stm> (French).

For further information about these assessment programs, contact

Ken Clark
Assistant Coordinator
Implementation Unit
Telephone: 945-3666
or 1-800-282-8069, extension 3666
Email: kclark@gov.mb.ca

More Time for Healthy Kids

In response to the *Healthy Kids, Healthy Futures Task Force Report* (June 2005), the Province of Manitoba is mandating the time spent in Kindergarten to Grade 10 physical education/health education (PE/HE) classes by the fall of 2007.

English and French documents were developed to help administrators implement the new requirements. *Scheduling Physical Education/Health Education: A Resource for School Administrators* is available online at <www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/physlth/>, and *Des stratégies astucieuses pour inscrire l'Éducation physique et l'Éducation à la santé à l'horaire – Ressources pour administrateurs* is available online at <www.edu.gov.mb.ca/m12/progetu/epes/>.

Print copies are being sent to all Kindergarten to Grade 10 schools. Copies can also be purchased from the Manitoba Text Book Bureau (English version—stock number 80554; French version—stock number 96534). This resource serves as an idea bank or collection of strategies for meeting time allocations.

Manitoba Text Book Bureau

Serving Manitoba Schools since 1931

Shop Online for

- recommended student learning resources
- curriculum-matched products
- departmental publications & resources
- software, audio & video resources, kits, manipulatives, technical instruments
- paper, student files, day planners



Check website for monthly specials!

www.mtbb.mb.ca

Toll-Free 1-866-771-6822

Fax 204-483-5041



Credit for Cultural Exploration

The reality of living in a diverse and pluralistic society, regardless of one's origins and social contexts, necessitates that students have the opportunity to experience schooling that is culturally appropriate and relevant, encourages social caring, and challenges prejudice and discrimination."

As part of its *Kindergarten to Grade 12 Action Plan for Ethnocultural Equity 2006–2008*, Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth is now promoting the opportunity for students to receive credit toward graduation for enhancing their knowledge of their own cultural origins or of a cultural group that interests them through a specific type of student-initiated project (SIP).

The Cultural Exploration SIP encourages students to deepen their connections to their own culture; for example, an Aboriginal student could spend time with an Elder.

Alternatively, students may wish to explore a culture other than

their own, spending time interacting with members of local cultural organizations. The skills, knowledge, and attitudes obtained from such activities can increase a student's self-esteem and maturity, strengthen cultural identity, and/or provide greater intercultural understanding and an appreciation of cultural diversity.

The process for obtaining the credit is similar to the one used for the Community Service SIP, where students receive prior approval for the activity and provide written documentation once the activity is completed. A student may earn a

maximum of one credit in Senior Years, and this credit can count toward graduation.

The school is responsible for approving the cultural exploration activity prior to its commencement and verifying that participation took place, when it took place, the number of hours contributed by the student, and the skills and knowledge obtained by the student in the cultural exploration activity in order to grant the credit.

This credit is available for the Senior Years as a credit for graduation purposes and does not require departmental registration.

For more information visit
<www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/policy/sics_sips.html>

or contact

Aileen Najduch
Acting Coordinator
Development Unit
Telephone: 204-945-2138
or 1-800-282-8069, extension 2138
Email: anajduch@gov.mb.ca

Independent Study: New and Revised Courses

The following English and French courses for independent study are new or have recently been revised.

Grade 9

- *Dessin industriel* (10G) New
- Electronics/Electricity (10G)
- Home Economics (10G) New
- Mathematics (10F)
- Physical Education/Health Education (10F) New

Grade 10

- Computer Science (20S) New
- English Language Arts (20F)

Grade 11

- Agriculture (30S)
- Computer Science (30S) New
- English Language Arts: Transactional Focus (30S)

Grade 12

- *Droit* (40S) New
- English Language Arts: Comprehensive Focus (40S)

For course descriptions, visit
<www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/dl/iso/>.

2006–2007 Course Guide for Independent Study Option

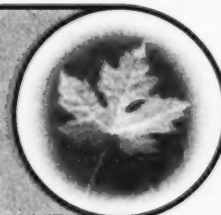
Order your print copy of
*Distance Learning:
Helping You Build Your
Future ... Your Way! A
Course Guide for Independent
Study, 2006–2007* by calling
toll-free: 1-800-465-9915.



The 2006–2007 course
guide is available online
at <www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/dl/iso/>.



Education for Sustainable Development Website:
www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/esd/



Global Interactions in Manitoba's Classrooms

Imagine the world as a system—a system that connects space and a system that connects time. If we think of everything as being connected, it could change the way we teach, act, and think about the world and the environments in which we live.

Canadians are massive consumers of resources, not all of which are renewable on human time scales (see “Did you know?” on page 5). These consumption numbers are among the highest in the world, and this is due, in part, to our geography and circumpolar position.

When we think of the world as a system over time, we begin to realize, for instance, that the decisions our grandparents made about how to farm the land continue to influence agricultural practices today and that the economic policies we endorse today will have an impact on urban socio-economic stability when our children are adults. The concept of sustainable development is rooted in a systems thinking model. It helps us understand ourselves and our world through a vision of *connectedness* in all things. The problems we face are complex and serious—and we need creative thinking and novel approaches to solve them. But we can solve them.

UNESCO has declared 2005 to 2014 the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, and this winter, Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth is responding to that initiative. Representatives have been delivering sustainability education presentations to groups of teachers, parent groups, administrators, and interested students. This has been the key component of the Department's Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) project, which intends to reach teachers throughout the provincial

“We did not inherit the land from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children.” (Haida proverb)

school system. What follows are some of the anticipated project outcomes, which speak to why Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth has embarked upon this year-long sequence of field activities that highlight the importance of ESD in curriculum and classroom practices and that encourage a changing ethos in schools:

- to clarify what education for sustainability means for teachers and students from international thinking to local situations, and to do this in face-to-face sessions
- to deliver to Manitoba teachers the key sustainability messages in curriculum that can be integrated into classroom thinking and practices
- to recognize current school practices that highlight ESD and to see this as a natural “integratable” into instruction and assessment—not as an addition for very busy teachers
- to identify where ESD resources can be accessed, including print and online sources

There are dozens of respected definitions of sustainable development, but perhaps the most commonly accepted is the 1987 World Commission on Environment and Development conclusion that sustainable development is “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of

future generations to meet their own needs.”

Our students need to become aware of the interdependency among the environment, the economy, and human health, and how they as individuals can make informed choices toward a more sustainable future. They are—as we are—citizens of this planet and the global community. Education toward appreciating the hoped-for goal of a sustainable future, then, is not an add-on for teachers, but is already an important curriculum integratable; think of it as a “natural resource” within the curriculum where all the raw materials are readily available.

There are many connections to be made to education for sustainable development across curricular areas, and much of what ESD promotes is already taking place in the day-to-day practices within Manitoba classrooms. There are many current resources available for teachers to access and use, including unit materials developed by teachers who already focus on ESD in their classrooms. Online resources include websites such as that maintained by the



Winnipeg-based International Institute for Sustainable Development at <www.iisd.org> or Education for Sustainable Development at <www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/esd/>.

In an approximately one-hour presentation, the Education for Sustainable Development project coordinator can share the ESD basics, which include the following:

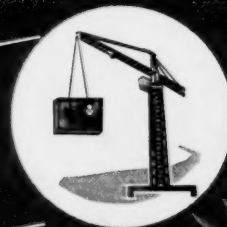
- Overview of Education for Sustainable Development in Today's and Tomorrow's Terms
- Curriculum Connections
- Print and Electronic Resources that Support ESD
- Getting Connected
 - How do schools tap into existing grants programs?
 - How do school-initiated programs (e.g., "idle-free" zones at schools) get started?
- Identifying Needs
 - What do teachers still need (e.g., resources, professional learning, mentoring) to support their teaching?



Used with permission. All rights reserved.

Did you know?

Each day, every Canadian uses approximately 232 kilograms of energy and resource materials or the equivalent of about 45 full shopping bags by weight.



In the lifetime of the average Canadian, he or she will use 125 million litres of water and generate 40 000 kilograms of garbage.



If you live past age 72, the amount of pesticide and fertilizer used in growing your food will be more than 7 tonnes.



Canada exports 1.6 billion barrels of oil per day; it also imports 1.0 billion barrels of oil per day.

Being a vast, circumpolar nation, Canadians use more energy per person than any other nation on Earth.



The on-site presentation will alert teachers to the significant number of grants available for project development and design, and how to go about accessing these funds. Teachers will also see the many resources related to all subject areas and how to access and use them effectively. The presentation will address the priority areas of ESD and will give concrete examples of how to link them to subject areas. Some teacher-designed units will also be shared as templates for use in classrooms.

These Education for Sustainable Development presentations will be made available until May 30, 2007.

Those who have not yet had the opportunity to hear how sustainability education can be integrated into classroom practices are invited to contact the Department.

For English presentations:

1-800-282-8069, extension 6162

or

For French presentations:

1-800-282-8069, extension 6620

Increased Support to Community Schools

Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth announced the Community Schools Partnership Initiative (CSPI) in January 2005. CSPI provides funding support to elementary schools in low socio-economic status communities across Manitoba to improve student learning, enhance schools, strengthen families, and build healthier communities.

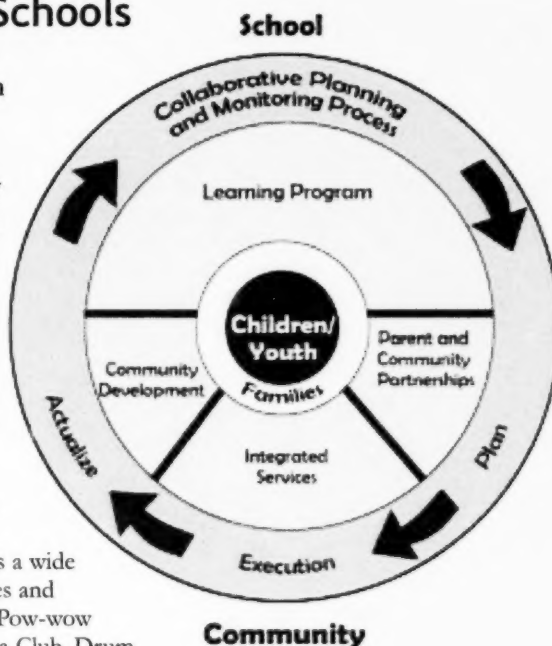
CSPI is intended to maximize the involvement of people and organizations by identifying and using community resources to provide the best possible education to students in Manitoba's schools. Community schools can bring parents together with voluntary, public, and private sectors, acting as a hub to a broad range of services and supports. Community schools also host a range of components, activities, and programs geared to enhance student outcomes, strengthen parent and community partnerships, integrate services, and build on community development.

The community schools approach holds promise for improving parental involvement in schools and coordinating the support systems of schools and other community service agencies. CSPI outcomes are expected to have an impact on issues of poverty, low academic achievement, poor student attendance, high migrancy/transiency rates, diverse student populations—barriers that can have substantial effects on programming within schools. Many communities encounter chronic challenges such as families that lack parenting skills, students with behavioural issues, and communities overwhelmed by drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence, vandalism, and a dependency on social welfare. There are also physical and geographical barriers to securing resources in a number of these communities. CSPI is a means to address the root-cause issues and provide grassroots solutions.

In December 2004, the Department provided funding to Wapanohk Community School in Thompson for an initial community school pilot project. Wapanohk offers a wide range of cultural activities and programs that include a Pow-wow Club, Fiddle Club, Drama Club, Drum Club, Family Night, Families and Schools Together, Feasts, Breakfast for Parents, and Meet the Teacher Night. Eighty-six percent of Wapanohk parents expressed satisfaction with the cultural programming. The Wapanohk project is a valuable resource for the Department, providing guidance and advice to other CSPI project sites.

During the 2005–2006 school year, the Department approved 15 schools for CSPI funding. Six project schools are located in the Winnipeg School Division, three are in the remainder of the city of Winnipeg, and six are in Brandon and rural and northern Manitoba. The schools use these development funds to strengthen partnership capacity, review current conditions and needs, and develop action plans to address them. The 15 projects are now continuing into their second year.

In September 2006, Minister Bjornson announced the addition of five schools to the CSPI, increasing the funding to a total of 20 project schools. The five new schools receiving funding are David Livingstone School and Norquay School in the Winnipeg School Division, Lavallee School in the Louis



Riel School Division, Kelsey Elementary School in the Kelsey School Division, and Alonsa School in the Turtle River School Division. To support the CSPI projects, the Department designed resources that include *Community Schools: A Support Document for Partners in the Community Schools Partnership Initiative* and a promotional brochure which are now available on the CSPI website at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/cspi.

By working together, communities and schools can enhance possibilities for people of all ages, backgrounds, and interests. They have the opportunity to identify and solve common issues by using their shared skills and assets. Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth is using its resources where they are needed most and anticipates positive changes in each community as the outcomes from each project become more evident.

For more information, contact
 Marlene Gallagher
 Aboriginal Education Consultant
 Aboriginal Education Directorate
 Telephone: 204-945-4379
 or 1-800-282-8069, extension 4379
 Email: mgallagher@gov.mb.ca

Parents Build Aboriginal Student Success

Building Student Success with Aboriginal Parents (BSSAP) is a three-year funding initiative designed to enhance Aboriginal parents' engagement in the public education system. Beginning in 2004–2005, the Province of Manitoba committed \$400,000 per year to 38 BSSAP projects in schools across the province.

The Aboriginal Education Directorate facilitated two project gatherings, the first in September 2004 to introduce the fund and its purpose, and the second in the fall of 2005 to share practice experiences from the first year and to increase project networking.

The River East Transcona School Division co-hosted the third gathering on September 27 and 28, 2006, in Winnipeg. Marilyn Robinson of Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth and Barbara Wynes of Manitoba Advanced Education and Literacy were members of the organizing team. Each of the 38 project groups invited four participants, including two parents and an Elder, to the gathering. The total number of participants reached 140 on the first day of registration.

Each day began with Opening Prayers from Elder Garry Robson. A group of teachers and parents from Wapanohk Community School, Mystery Lake School District, in Thompson gave the keynote address. They spoke about how their school increased parental involvement by integrating Cree language and culture into the curriculum. This school has been very successful in involving parents in all aspects of the school environment.

Two breakout sessions had eight sites presenting on their BSSAP projects and displaying their pictures. Each session was filled to capacity with other sites wanting to exchange ideas. Cedar Wrap Gift Giving teachings were introduced, and throughout the two days participants made gifts. Aboriginal comedian Gerry "The Big Bear" Barrett entertained and made everyone laugh. Elder Bill Ballantyne ended the first day by speaking about the importance of parents and grandparents, music and stories.

The second day started with a Gallery Walk where participants could stroll by displays of all 38 projects in the lobby area of the hotel. At noon, the Honourable Peter Bjornson, Minister of Education, Citizenship and

Youth, officially announced the Aboriginal parent guide, *Helping Your Child Succeed in School: A Guide for Parents and Families of Aboriginal Students*, and the Community Schools Partnership Initiative. The Minister took the time to meet all the participants by going to each of their tables and shaking their hands. Margaret Park School did a moving presentation for the Minister and the entire group: 30 students and some of the parents performed a song about how love can solve our problems, and a drum group performed traditional music with parents playing the Big Drum.

The breakout sessions in the afternoon were again filled to the walls with people sharing stories of residential schools and Reading the Culture Family Portfolios. Participants were entertained by Elder Kevin Tacan who played flute and told stories about music and Elders in the school.



Photography by Helen Robinson-Settee

A closing circle ended the two-day gathering with everyone committed to increasing parental involvement through established parent groups, parent/community sharing of expertise with students and staff, parent participation in planning culturally appropriate activities and information workshops, and parent/elder/community rooms.

Project feedback from the gathering indicated a need for more information on how to proceed, strategies to engage parents and to increase community involvement, and more opportunity to learn how others have enhanced parental participation leading to their children's success.

For more information, contact

Bernice Daigneault-Hammersmith
Parent and Community Consultant
Aboriginal Education Directorate
Telephone: 204-945-8782
or 1-800-282-8069, extension 8782
Email: bdaigneault@gov.mb.ca

Manitoba's New Career Development Courses

The economy of the twenty-first century will need workers who can respond and adapt to change and who are lifelong learners. Canada is on the verge of a workforce shortage that will create many new job opportunities.

The ability to predict work of the future is becoming more and more challenging. Our knowledge-based economy requires more highly skilled workers at a time when the demographics of our country reveal a shrinking workforce and the underutilization of many of our workers. Work has been altered by factors such as

- globalization
- rapid spread of information and communication technology
- workforce population decline
- aging population

Canada is shifting to a new career-building paradigm that recognizes that career development is a lifelong process of skills acquisition and growth through a

continuum of learning and mastery. People will need to play a greater role in the construction and development of their own careers. Canadians will need to develop a new set of career-building skills that will enable them to

- be flexible
- be adaptable
- be self-reliant in order to construct and manage their lives and careers
- access labour market information
- be able to use this information effectively

The boundaries between work and life are becoming fuzzy, and people will need to create a balance in their lives. In the new paradigm, career development is the process of managing work, learning, and life. It means one's whole life, not just one's occupation. This paradigm requires Canadians to learn and develop a set of career-building skills that enable them to be self-reliant and able to construct and manage their lives and careers.

Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth is developing four new career development courses as part of an action plan to ensure students are equipped to set and achieve their career development goals throughout their learning and working lives.

By connecting school learning with workplace and labour market realities, the courses will contribute to increasing the number of students graduating from high school in Manitoba. These courses will help students acquire and apply the knowledge and skills needed to make appropriate decisions for work, learning, and life in today's economy, thereby providing a smoother transition between high school

graduation and post-secondary education/training.

The experiential learning components of the courses will provide students with opportunities to explore potential occupations and to demonstrate employability skills, essential skills, and specific occupational skills. The broad range of experiences may vary from community visitor presentations or volunteerism to community placements through which students have opportunities to gain knowledge and learn skills that are sometimes not available to them in their school setting.

The courses are titled

- *Grade 9 Career Development: Life/Work Exploration (10S)*
- *Grade 10 Career Development: Life/Work Planning (20S)*
- *Grade 11 Career Development: Life/Work Building (30S)*
- *Grade 12 Career Development: Life/Work Transitioning (40S)*

The Grade 9 and Grade 10 courses were sent out in draft form in September 2006 for voluntary implementation. It is anticipated that the new courses will replace the career development school-initiated courses (SICs) as of September 2007. It is recommended that the Grade 9 and Grade 10 courses be offered in sequence, although they can be offered independently of each other (i.e., only Grade 9 or Grade 10).

The Department has started developing the Grade 11 and the Grade 12 courses, which will be available for voluntary implementation in September 2007.

For further information, contact

Tom Prins
Curriculum Consultant
Development Unit
Telephone: 204-945-7974
or 1-800-282-8069, extension 7974
Email: tprins@gov.mb.ca



Intensive French in Manitoba

After only three days of Intensive French (IF) in Heather Allen's Grade 5 class at Athlone School in the St. James-Assiniboia School Division, students began speaking in complete sentences, integrating new French vocabulary and expressions. Principal Margaret Ann Attenborrow is amazed at the progress the students have made in such a short period of time. Heather Allen uses numerous communicative strategies to convey meaning in this second language while the students respond using new structures and phrases in French.

Nationally, Intensive French is taught in most provinces and territories. Approximately ten thousand students have studied in Intensive French across Canada since its inception in Newfoundland and Labrador in 1998. Also known as *Le Français intensif*, the program continues to grow both on a national level and provincially. Researchers and founders of Intensive French, Dr. Claude Germain (Université du Québec à Montréal) and Dr. Joan Netten (Memorial University of Newfoundland), conceptualized the program as a language arts experience using a literacy-based approach. The students are exposed to an intensive period of instruction in the second language for a five-month period. This block of time allows for the delivery of three to four times the number of hours of instruction usually devoted to French in the school year (an increase from approximately 90 hours to 300 hours). This enrichment of the Basic French program occurs in either Grade 5 or 6.

By adjusting the class schedule to enable the concentrated block of time in French in the first half of the year, other subject areas (with the exception of mathematics, physical education/health education, and music offered from September to June in English) are taught in the second half of the year.

The use of language in context during an intensive block of time permits the development of spontaneous

communication among students in IF. The second language skills gained by the students are a result of this intensive program of study which incorporates numerous communicative second language teaching strategies.

Since the 2005–2006 school year, Shamrock and Windsor Schools, under the direction of Sheena Braun and Charles Tinman, respectively, in the Louis Riel School Division, have been offering Intensive French in Grade 6. Both schools are also offering Enhanced French/*Le Français approfondi* in Grade 7. The Enhanced French Program is offered to students in the follow-up years, normally after having completed a year in Intensive French. Students continue with instruction that uses the same type of teaching strategies and methodology as was used in the Intensive French year of study. In Canada, Enhanced French is offered in Grades 6, 7, and 8 or in Grades 7 and 8.

To find out more about Intensive French, visit the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers website at <www.caslt.org/teachers/fslintens.htm> and/or read the article "A New Look at Core French: Intensive French in Newfoundland and Labrador" by Joan Netten and Claude Germain, found at <www.unb.ca/slec/Publications/if_article.htm>.



Used with permission. All rights reserved.

For more information, contact

Linda Romeo
Curriculum Consultant
Bureau de l'éducation française
Telephone: 204-945-6916
or 1-800-282-8069, extension 6916
Email: liromeo@gov.mb.ca

Education for Sustainable Development Grants

Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth and Manitoba Hydro forged a partnership to promote professional learning for sustainability in classrooms through an Education for Sustainable Development Grant. The following schools were selected to receive up to \$2,000.00 to support teachers in their efforts to plan and teach sustainability-focused units:

Grand Rapids School: Students will learn socio-cultural, environmental, and economic elements through Kathie F. Nunley's Layered Curriculum approach, focusing on a variety of sustainability areas while being hands-on. This will enable students to examine the future of the resources they use daily and realize the impact they have on the future of their community.

Fort Richmond Collegiate: Students will familiarize themselves with the principles of sustainability practices regarding water stewardship, global agriculture, and environmental studies from a language arts and science perspective.

Gimli High School: Students will learn to understand and appreciate Lake Winnipeg as an ecological system, as well as the relationships of humans to the lake and its watershed. Issues of stewardship, economy, health, culture, rural development, recreation, aesthetics, and the roles of government and the general public will be discussed regarding the maintenance of the lake as a vital resource and ecosystem.

Argyle Alternative High School: Students will learn about sustainability issues including alternative energy, soil conservation, air quality, recycling, composting, Manitoba crops, water management and conservation, climatic measurements, and environmental sustainability. The curriculum development approach that will be used is based on Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe's *Understanding by Design*: identifying overarching concepts, stating understandings that students come away with, and formulating essential questions as a means to focus and engage learners.

Henry G. Izatt Middle School: Students will use the Fort Whyte Centre as a learning environment and draw upon the philosophy and principles of sustainable development as a context and foundation for learning. The curriculum unit/program will focus on sustainable urban agriculture, alternative energy sources, landscape naturalization, outdoor recreation activities, and service learning.

Crystal Project: This teaching resource is currently being developed in conjunction with the Centre for Research in Youth, Science Teaching and Learning (CRYSTAL) at the University of Manitoba. The resource, once developed, will draw on Manitoba curriculum linkages and has great potential to positively influence Senior Years education in Manitoba.

Technical-Vocational High School: A technical/vocational curriculum unit focusing on the themes of sustainable energy and sustainable transportation is being developed to teach students about solar energy through the creation of a solar bicycle.

Vincent Massey Collegiate: Students will participate in the construction of an Alternative Energy Array on the roof of Vincent Massey Collegiate, composed of a small-scale wind turbine and an array of photovoltaic cells. The turbine will be used as a curriculum tool to promote sustainable development industries and to encourage students to adopt environmentally sustainable practices.

Crocus Plains Regional Secondary School: Students will learn about the effects of culture, poverty, agriculture, and health through the examination of immigration trends in Brandon and the recognition of diversity among Aboriginal people. This will enable students to understand cultural bias and change while studying the issues and difficulties that arise when there are changes to culture and community.

Louis Riel School Division Arts and Technology Centre: Students will learn of environmentally sustainable practices by examining how salon practices are interconnected with economy, environment, and human health and well-being. The program will look at energy and water conservation by using efficient appliances and effective waste management.

Thank you to all schools that submitted proposals. It is clear that there are numerous projects related to the teaching and learning of sustainable development in schools across the province. Congratulations to all schools selected to receive a grant.

For further information, contact

Christina McDonald
Sustainable Development Coordinator
Research and Planning Branch
Telephone: 204-945-1924
or 1-800-282-8069, extension 1924
Email: chmcdonald@gov.mb.ca

MERN

Manitoba Education
Research Network
www.mern.ca

Connecting research in education → to policy and practice

Research Profile

Rural Education

Rural communities wish to envision a bright future for themselves and their children. Due to various demographic and economic realities, they often become innovative out of necessity. This innovation is most clearly seen in the rural school, which is a strong symbol of identity, both as a formal centre of learning and as one of the largest employers in the community.

Dr. Dawn Wallin's research focuses on issues in rural education, particularly on rural educational priorities and school division capacity. Her study is based on a provincial survey and four regional case studies of Manitoba school divisions. The research showed there are three main educational priorities for those who live and work in rural areas: improving student outcomes, quality of teachers and administrators, and educational finance.

According to Wallin's research, rural

parents, staff, school administrators, trustees, and other community members have a generally positive perception of their capacity to achieve their educational priorities. Further, results indicate that rural school divisions' strengths are related to the diversity of networks they build to create educational opportunities and to facilitate resource management. In response to a question about what role the provincial government should play in educational governance and change in rural areas, answers centered on educational funding, curriculum implementation, meeting student needs, and input into provincial policy and decision making.

Profile

Dr. Dawn Wallin is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba. Her area of specialization is Educational Administration. Prior to coming to the University of Manitoba, she was an assistant professor at the University of Texas-Pan American in Edinburg, Texas, and a teacher/administrator with Kindersley School Division in Kindersley, Saskatchewan. Her research interests include rural education, women in leadership, and educational administration.



"There has to be the will . . . to value children and put children first, ahead of the fiscal and political landscape."
—School Trustee

The implications for rural education from this research are numerous:

- Rural communities want to have the capacity to address early childhood, Kindergarten to Grade 12, and adult education and training.
- Education cannot be separated from the rest of community life.

- Stories of those who live and work in rural communities must be shared and media presence must be cultivated to bring attention to successes.
- Locally determined research and participatory partnerships between researchers and those who live in rural communities should occur with local, national, and international interests.
- Rural educators must share their concerns with government policy makers and must be a consistent source of advocacy.
- Provincial education representatives and local rural stakeholders can creatively strategize across departments to deal with rural issues.
- Cross-community groups can work together, sharing information and services wherever possible.
- Governmental and community agencies must collaborate to better meet provincial mandates while respecting local community realities.

"We want what is best for our kids. They shouldn't be denied because they aren't close to the city centre."
—Parent

Since educational leaders are the most optimistic in their belief that rural communities have the capacity to achieve their priorities, it follows that they, along with targeted resources and assistance from provincial authorities, should take the lead to implement rural school improvements grounded in a commitment to quality rural schooling and community development.

For further information, contact

Dr. Dawn Wallin
Assistant Professor, Faculty of Education
University of Manitoba
Telephone: 204-474-6069
Email: wallind@ms.umanitoba.ca

Brandon School Division's Middle Years Initiative

By Donna Forsyth and Betty Howell

Co-Chairs of the Middle Years Initiative, Brandon School Division

The Brandon School Division's Middle Years Initiative has provided a framework for extending our thinking, fostering our professional learning, and guiding changes in effective assessment and reporting practices.

In 2004, Brandon School Division embarked on a four-year, system-wide Middle Years Initiative aimed at

- improving the achievement of all Middle Years students by connecting best practices in literacy, numeracy, and assessment
- developing assessment and reporting processes and protocols that enhance learning for all students

The Middle Years Initiative began with a focus on literacy, specifically targeting reading comprehension in the content areas. All Middle Years teachers participated in a series of three workshops on "Comprehension across the Curriculum." The initial focus on strategies in the content areas led us to a deeper examination of best practices in literacy and the critical components of a balanced literacy program for Middle Years students. Throughout the year, the teacher representatives on the Middle Years Initiative Steering Committee participated in workshops and served as literacy leaders in the sharing, application, and ongoing study of new strategies with their school teams.

In conjunction with the literacy focus, the groundwork for the next phase of

the Initiative, centering on assessment *for* learning, was laid through an Anne Davies assessment conference attended by the 35-member Steering Committee in the fall of 2004.

The literacy work continued in 2005–2006 and also incorporated a focus on assessment *for* learning. Early in the fall of 2005, all Middle Years teachers participated in a workshop on classroom-based assessment facilitated by Anne Davies, who also presented a special session for the 18 principals on the Middle Years Initiative Access Committee.

Traditional practices and beliefs were being examined—assessment was no longer only a process for monitoring student achievement.

The two key concepts of assessment *for* learning that directed our divisional inquiry were increasing student involvement in all aspects of assessment and providing students with descriptive feedback versus evaluative feedback.

A group of nine Middle Years teachers, representing seven schools, formed a study group to examine current research, to implement assessment *for*

learning practices in their classrooms, and to share their experiences and insights. Through a special Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth dispensation granted to Brandon School Division, three teachers from this group agreed to pilot alternate reporting formats, which eliminated percentage marks and replaced them with criterion-referenced descriptors of student achievement. School teams across the division began to explore these concepts.

As principals, steering committee members, assessment study group members, and school-based teams interacted, they shared their observations, insights, and questions. The potential of assessment *for* learning was becoming more evident. Traditional practices and beliefs were being examined—assessment was no longer only a process for monitoring student achievement.

This year, at least one Middle Years class in every school is participating in a pilot project to report student progress and achievement in terms of criterion-based descriptors instead of traditional percentage grades.

Together, we will continue to implement practices that can tap the powerful potential of assessment as a learning tool for improving student engagement and achievement.

Education

MANITOBA

ISSN 0704-2671

Every effort has been made to acknowledge original sources and to comply with copyright law. If cases are identified where this has not been done, please notify Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth. Errors or omissions will be corrected in a future edition. Sincere thanks to the authors and publishers who allowed their original material to be adapted or reproduced and translated into French.

Some images © 2003–2007 www.clipart.com.

The newsletter includes articles from the education community and from Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth. Signed articles appearing in this magazine express the views of their authors and not necessarily those of the Department.

Distribution:

Education Manitoba is distributed free to schools in Manitoba. This newsletter can be viewed online at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/newsletter/.

A similar document has been developed by the Bureau de l'éducation française Division for the Français and the French Immersion Programs.

Contact Information:

We invite contributions to *Education Manitoba*. When forwarding submissions, please include your name and telephone number, and send materials in print and electronic formats to:

Linda Palma
W120–1970 Ness Avenue
Winnipeg, MB R3J 0Y9
Ph: 204-945-8806
Fax: 204-945-5060
Email: lpalma@gov.mb.ca

We also want to hear what you think about our newsletter. Please send your comments, ideas, and suggestions to the address specified above.



Manitoba 